

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-119 are currently pending. Claims 1, 19, 27, 38, 61, 83, 101, and 109 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-119 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,202,092 to Takimoto (hereinafter “the ‘092 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,509,074 to Choudhury et al. (hereinafter “the ‘074 patent”).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a printing system, comprising: (1) a printing apparatus; (2) a terminal apparatus for transmitting information including a request to execute a specific print job and for receiving information; (3) notification means for notifying a registered user of the printing apparatus of information on authority of the registered user to use the printing apparatus to execute any print job prior to the transmission of the request to execute the specific print job to be printed by the printing apparatus, but after the registered user has established access to use of the printing apparatus; and (4) a network connecting the printing apparatus, the terminal apparatus, and the notification means so that information transmission and reception in the system is performed through an electrical signal via the network. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, the Office Action asserts that the ‘092 patent discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of “notifying a user

¹ See, e.g., Figure 9 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.

prior to the transmission of the request to execute the print job to be printed by the printing apparatus,”² and relies on the ‘074 patent to remedy that deficiency.

The ‘092 patent is directed to a print system including a shared printer on a network in which the authority of each user to use the printer is set in a security database. After a print request, including the number of sheets to be printed, is sent to a security validating device, the ‘092 patent discloses that the security validating device decides whether authorization to use the printer is to be granted based on the restrictions on the user maintained in the database and the status of the user. Further, the ‘092 patent discloses that, if the printing is authorized, the printing is completed and the status of the user is updated in the security database. However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the ‘092 patent fails to disclose means for notifying a registered user of the printing apparatus of information on authority of the registered user to use the printing apparatus (to execute any print job) prior to the transmission of the request to execute the (specific) print job to be printed by the printing apparatus, as recited in amended Claim 1.

The ‘074 patent is directed to a method of protecting electronically published materials including the step of receiving a request for documents from a user having a computer with a display device or a printer, wherein the request includes an identification of the user. Further, the ‘074 method includes the steps of authenticating the request with a copyright server; using the copyright server to direct a document server to act upon proper authentication of the request; using the document server to create a uniquely encoded, compressed, and encrypted document for each authenticated request; and forwarding the documents through the network to corresponding agents of each authenticated user. As shown in the flowchart of Figure 4, the ‘074 patent discloses that, in Step 232, the request for documents is received along with a unique ID from a user computer via the network. In

² See page 3 of the outstanding Office Action.

response, as shown in Steps 234-246, the system authenticates the request and the documents are ultimately forwarded to the user who requested the documents.

However, Applicants note that the ‘092 patent is not directed to notifying a registered user of the printing apparatus of information on authority of the registered user to use the printing apparatus, as recited in Claim 1. Rather, the ‘074 patent is directed to a user obtaining a document from a document server if authorized to do so by a copyright server.

Regarding printing, the ‘074 patent merely discloses that if the document is received by the user from the document server, it may be printed. Even if the entire process disclosed by the ‘074 patent of obtaining the document from the document server is construed to read on “notifying the user”, it cannot be construed as notifying a registered user of the printing apparatus of information on authority of the registered user to use the printing apparatus to execute any print job prior to transmission of the request to execute a specific print job to be printed by the printing apparatus, as recited in Claim 1. At most, the ‘074 patent discloses that the user requests a document, the document is received, and then the user requests that the document be printed. The ‘074 patent is silent regarding notifying a registered user of information on authority of the registered user to use the printing apparatus to execute any print job prior to the transmission of a request or execute a specific print job, as recited in amended Claim 1. The ‘074 patent does not disclose whether a user is able or not able to use a printing apparatus, but appears to assume that any document that is retrieved by the document server can also be printed on the user’s printer. Thus, the ‘074 patent is not concerned with printer security. Rather, the ‘074 patent is directed to regulating access to specific documents, and the printing of the retrieved document is an afterthought. While the ‘074 patent may imply that the user has implied authority to print any document that is retrieved, subject to authentication, the ‘074 patent is silent regarding authority of a registered user to use the printing apparatus to execute any print job, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '092 and '074 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest a printing system having notification means for notifying a registered user of a printing apparatus of information on authority of the registered user to use a printing apparatus to execute any print job prior to the transmission of a request to execute a specific print job to be printed by the printing apparatus, as recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Independent Claims 19, 27, 38, 61, 83, 101, and 109 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, the independent claims have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of the independent claims (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 19, 27, 38, 61, 83, 101, and 109 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '092 and '074 patents.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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